

# Independent Investigation and the Composition

A silhouette of a person wearing a trench coat and a hat, standing in a misty or foggy environment. The person is facing away from the camera, looking towards a bright, glowing light source on the left side of the frame. The background is filled with soft, white mist or smoke, creating a mysterious and atmospheric scene.

Karen Yager – Knox Grammar

# Texts of Own Choosing

- *“explore, analyse and critically evaluate a range of other examples of this genre from different contexts and media...”*
- Choose texts from a range of modes, media and forms or different times and/or cultures.
- Choose texts that have a clear contextual value
- Select your own texts rather than using the same texts as your class as this will invite personal engagement, and original and perceptive interpretations.
- Select texts that enable you to discuss the HOW and meaning effectively.



# Texts of Own Choosing

- Engagement with all aspects of the question
- Seamless integration of the texts
- *“In the better responses, candidates maintained a strong engagement with the question throughout, constructing clear and balanced arguments supported by judiciously selected textual evidence...In English Extension 1, synthesis is the key to a sophisticated response”*



# Texts of Own Choosing

- Are you enthusiastic about your texts of own choosing?
- Do you have more than three?
- How do they connect with your prescribed texts?
- Are they aberrant?
- Do they allow you to show what you know about genre, crime writing, and how meaning is conveyed?





# Texts of Own Choosing

- Include texts that are **interesting**, **innovative** and **unusual**
- Select texts that **challenge** the traditional notion of crime writing
- *“It was evident in the more sophisticated responses that candidates had individually and carefully selected ‘other texts’ that would develop their argument in an effective manner”*





- *Breaking Bad*
- *Spooks*
- *Wire in the Blood*
- [Good Cop](#)
- *Deadwood*
- *Life on Mars*
- *Southland*
- [Wallander](#)
- *Death in Paradise*
- *Mad Dogs*
- *Waking the Dead*
- *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*





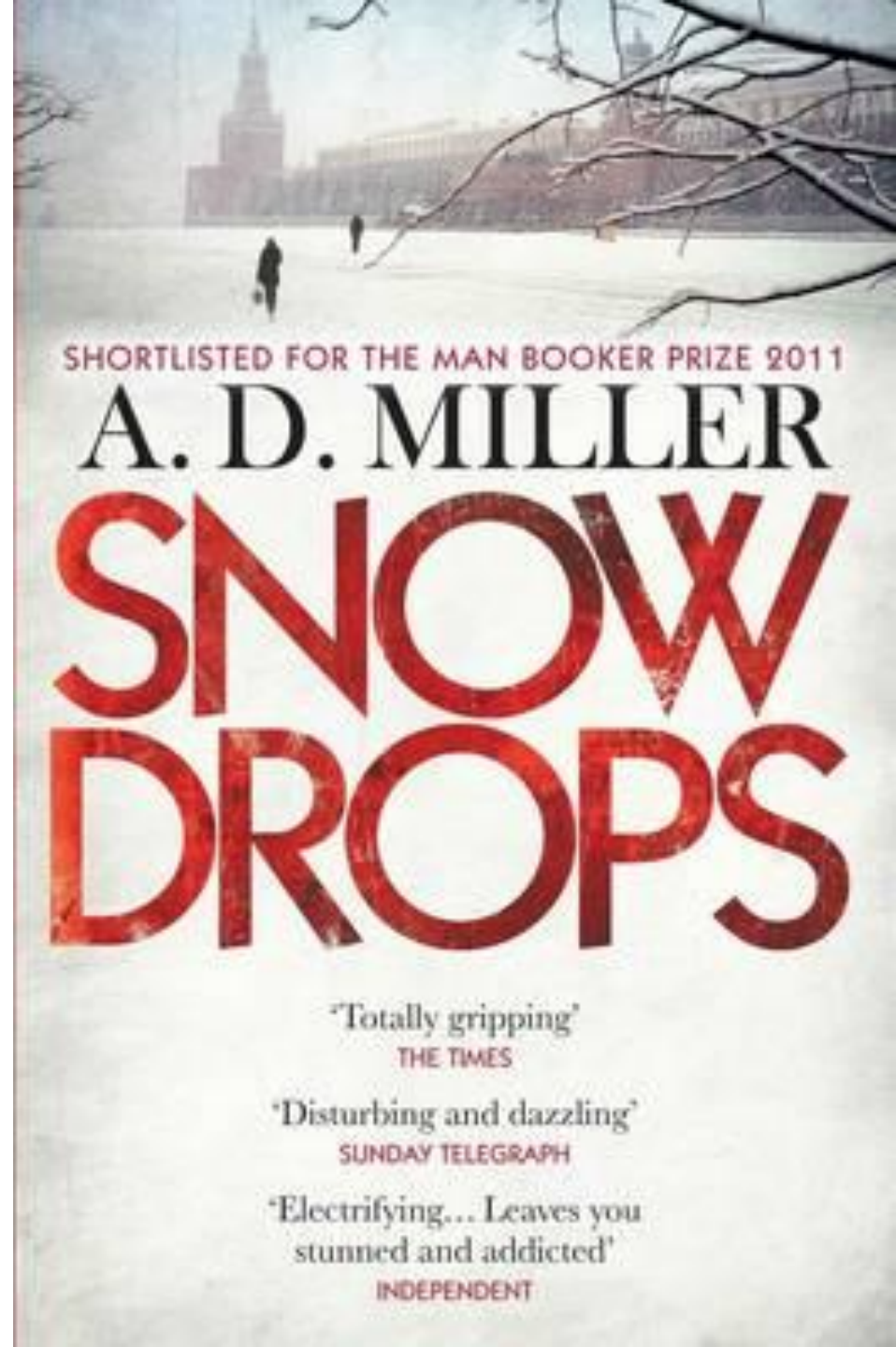
# Films

- *Brick*
- *The Departed*
- *In Bruges*
- *Hot Fuzz*
- *No Country for Old Men*
- *Animal Kingdom*
- *Sin City*
- *Road to Perdition*
- *Chinatown*
- *Sin Nombre*
- *Savages*
- *Pulp Fiction*
- *Mystic River*
- *Donny Brasco*
- *Reservoir Dogs*
- *City of God*
- *Fargo*
- *Tsotsi*
- *GoodFellas*
- *Tinker Tailor Spy*
- *Shutter Island*



# Novels

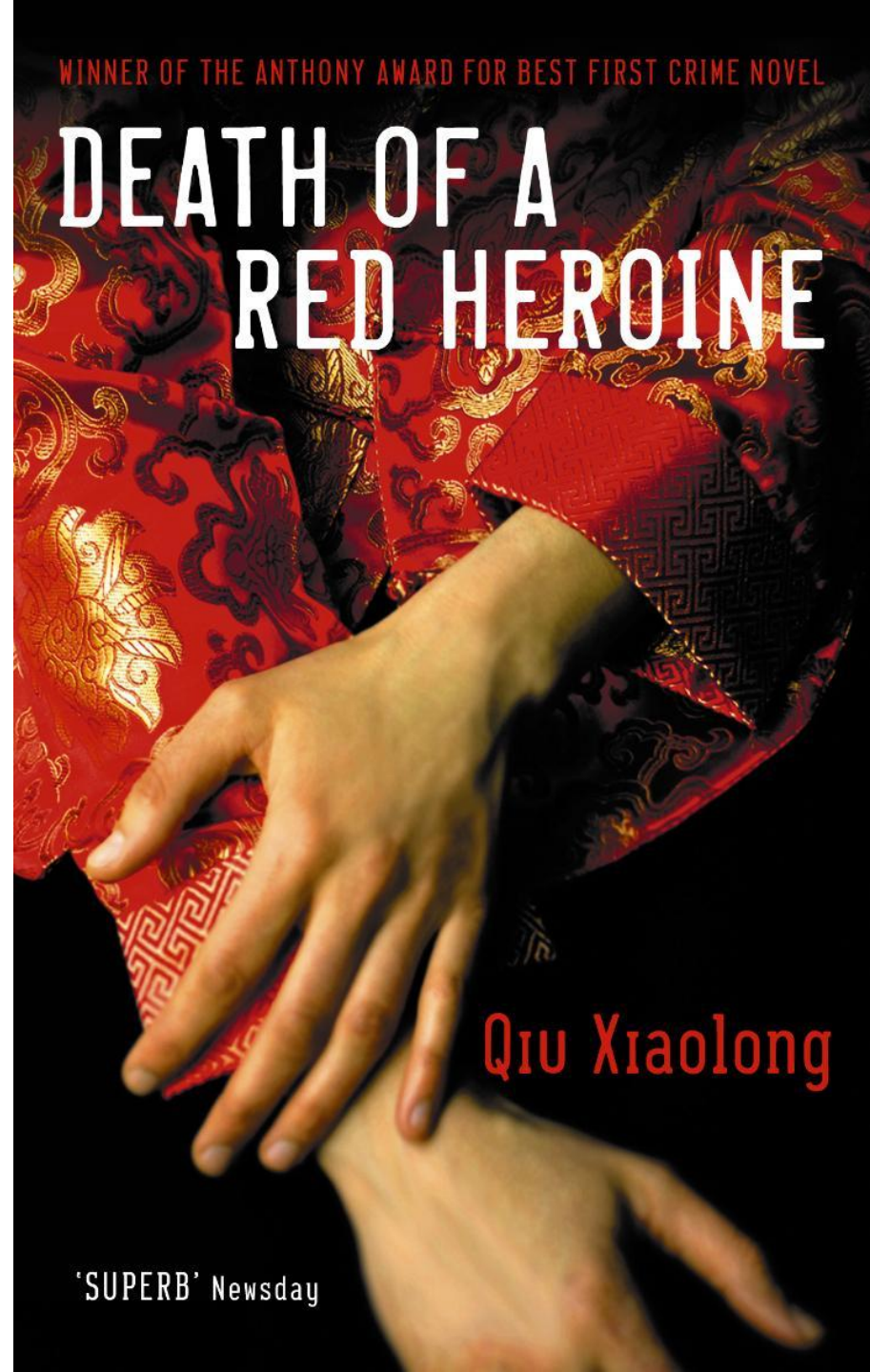
- *Snowdrops* – A.D. Miller
- *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* – Peter Høeg
- *The Black Dahlia* - James Ellroy
- *The Unknown Terrorist* – Richard Flanagan
- *The White Tiger* - Aravind Adiga
- *City of Glass* - Paul Auster





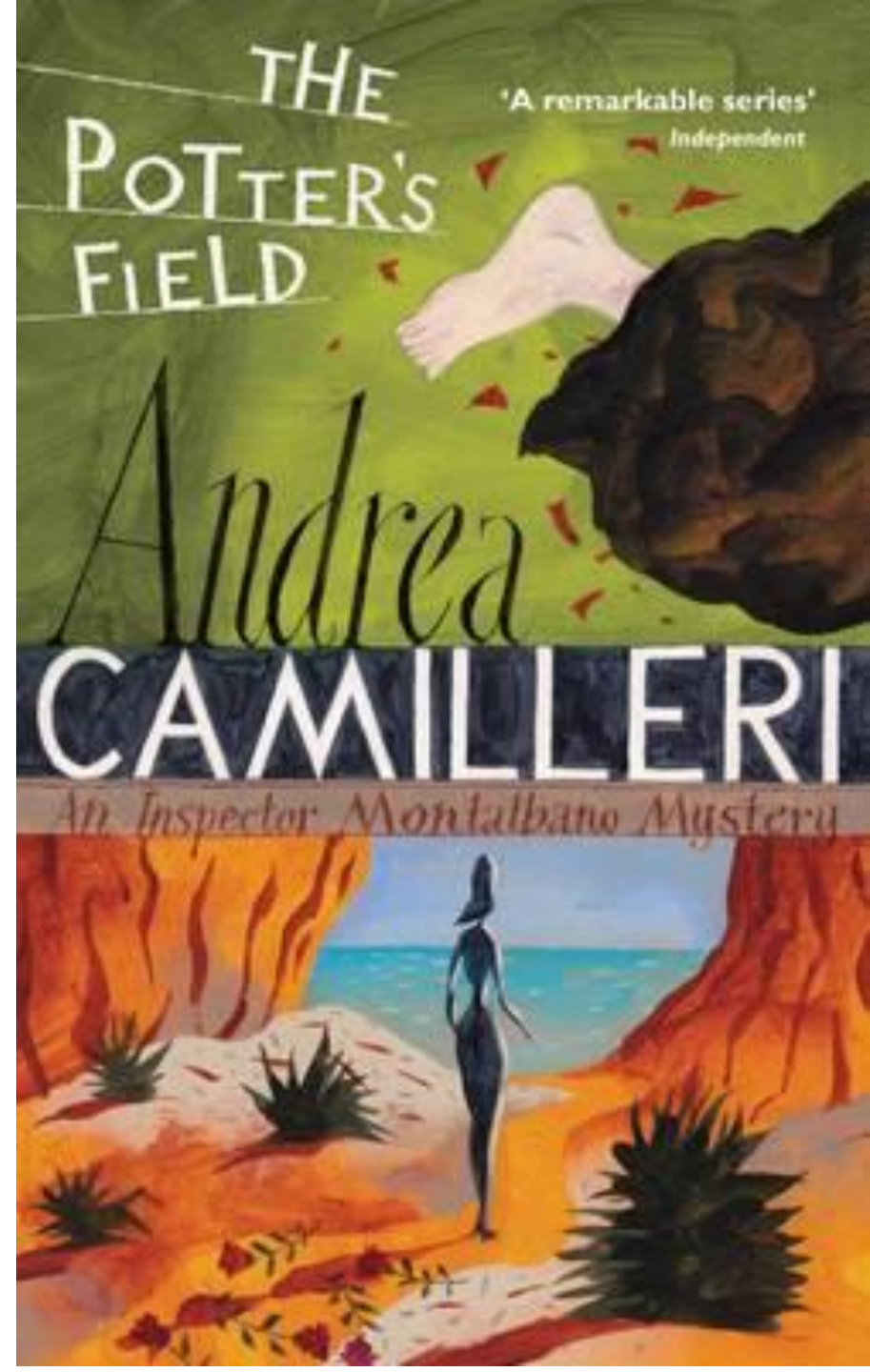
# Novels

- *My Name is Red* and *Snow* - Orhan Pamuk
- *Death of a Red Heroine* - Qiu Xiaolong
- *Sacred Games* - Vikram Chandra
- *Out* - Natsuo Kirino
- *The Innocent*, *Saturday* or *Sweet Tooth* – Ian McEwan
- *Skinny Dip* - Carl Hiaasen



# Novels

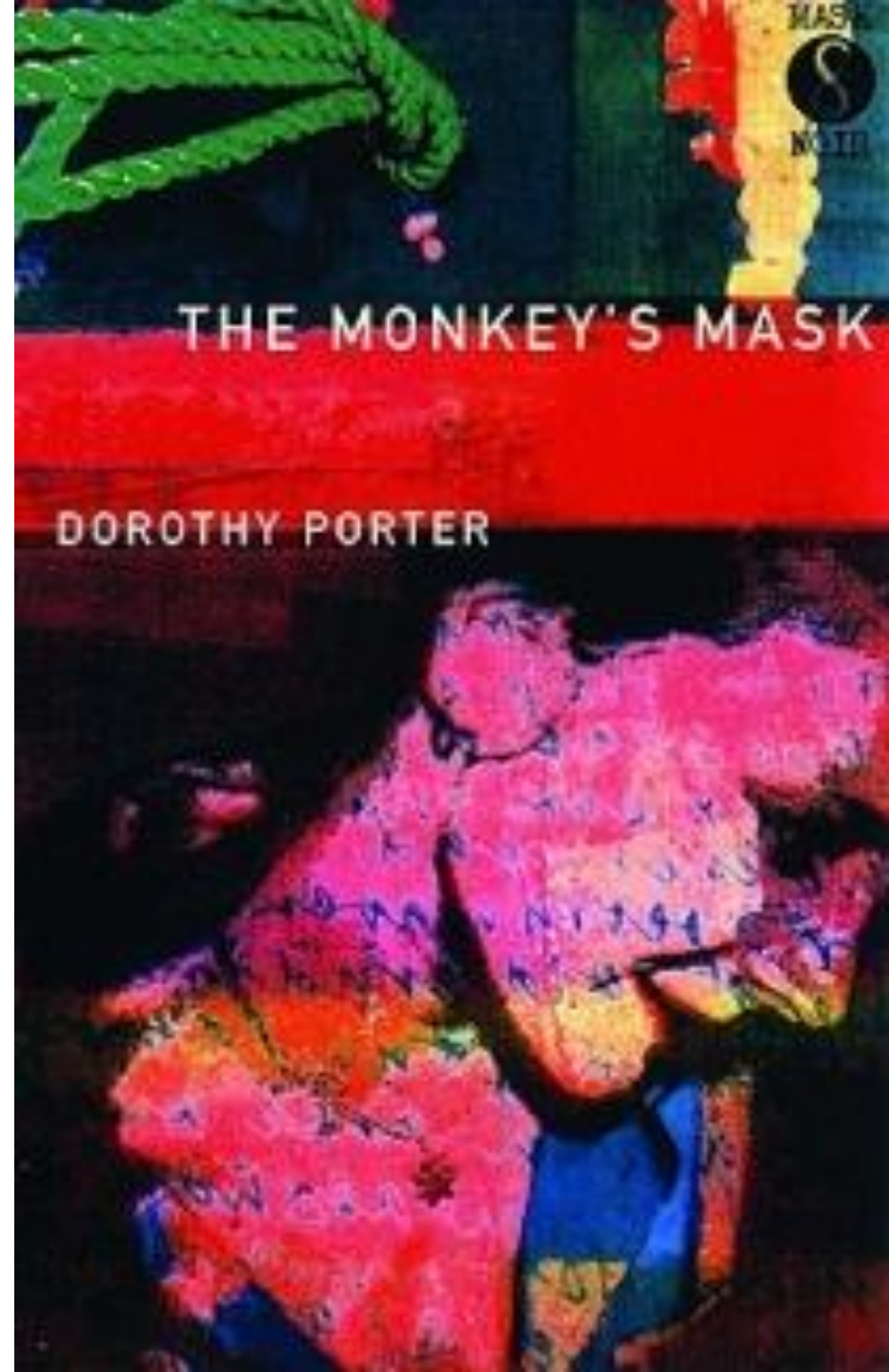
- *Satori and Savages* – Don Winslow
- Wallander series - Henning Mankell
- *The 100 year old Man who climbed out the window and disappeared* - Jonas Jonasson
- *Wash This Blood Clean From My Hand* – Fred Vargas
- *One Shot* – Lee Child
- *The Potter's Field* - Andrea Camilleri





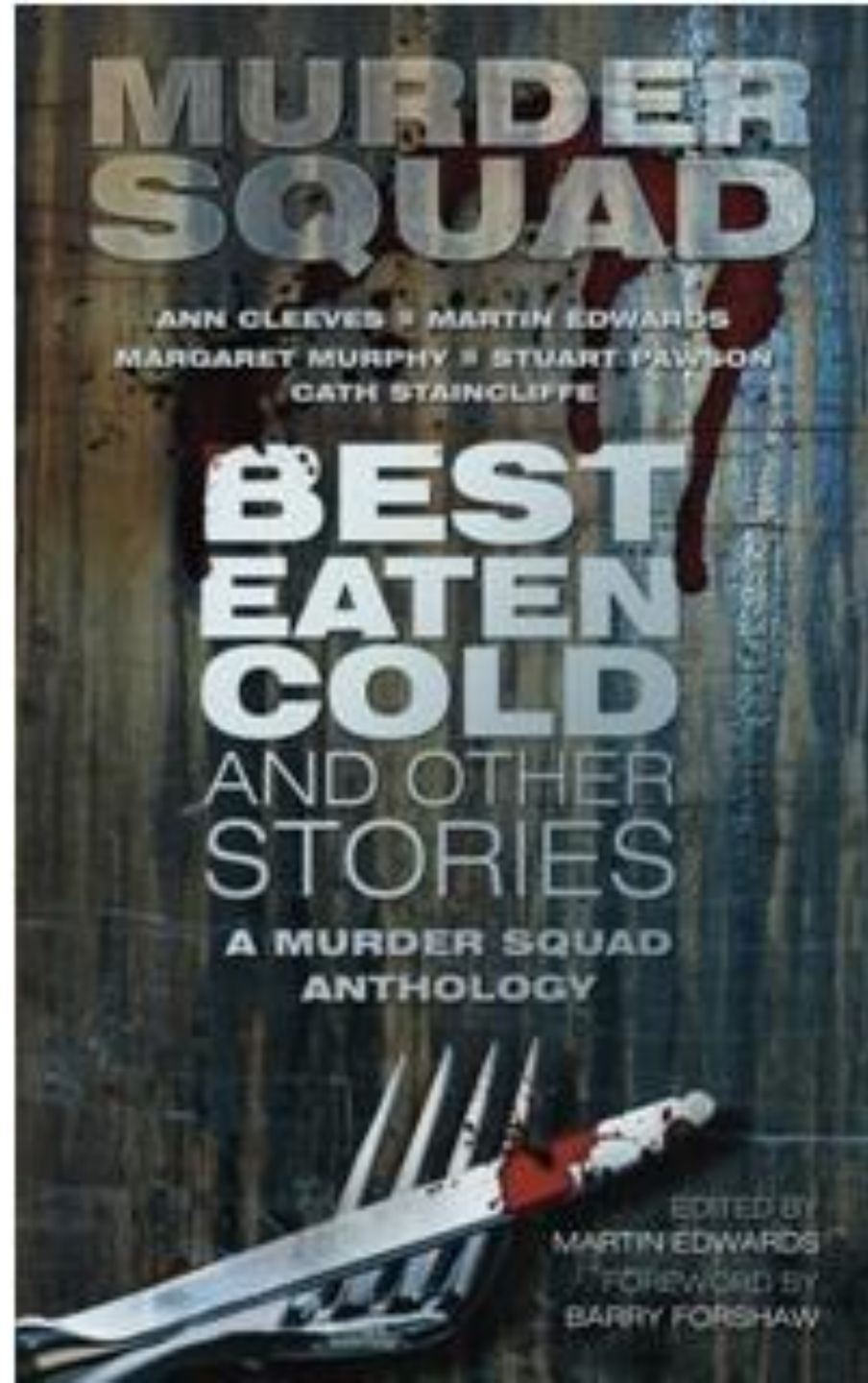
# Poetry

- Sean O'Brien - *The Genre: The Travesty of Justice*,  
<http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/archives/places/commissioned/obrien/>
- Steven Herrick – *Cold Skin* (2007)
- W.H. Auden - 'Detective Story'
- BJ Omanson - *Hard Boiled Sonnets*, 2001,  
<http://www.scuttlebuttsmallchow.com/boiled.html>.
- Dorothy Porter – *The Monkey's Mask*
- Robert Browning – 'Porphyria's Lover'



# Short Stories

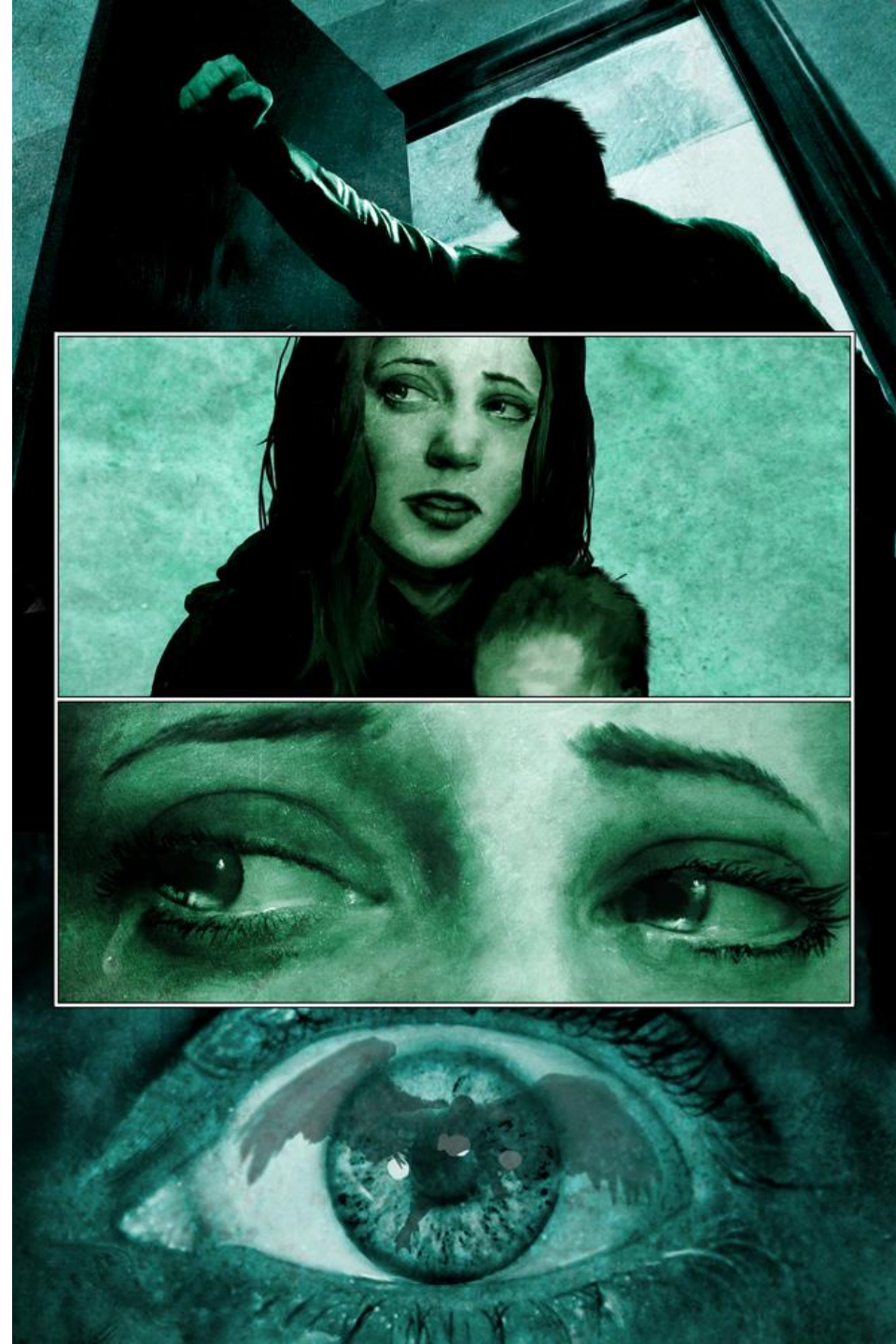
- *Best Eaten Cold and Other Stories: A Murder Squad Anthology* - Martin Edwards (Ed)
- *Guilty Consciences* – Martin Edwards (Ed)
- *Straight, Bent and Barbara Vine* – Gary Disher
- 'A Twist of Noir': <http://a-twist-of-noir.blogspot.com/>
- *Suddenly a Knock on the Door* – Etgar Keret





# Others....

- Songs: *Murder Ballads* - Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds – ‘[Stagger Lee](#)’, ‘[Where the Wild Roses Grow](#)’, ‘[Song of Joy](#)’
- Graphic Novels: *Max Payne*, *Sin City*, *Road to Perdition*



# Extended Response

## Your Concepts/Ideas

- What ideas/understanding have you gained from your study of the genre of Crime Writing?
- These ideas/concepts become the framework and drivers for your extended response.



# The Response

- The thesis or line of argument through genre theory
- In response to the question
- The framework and drivers for the extended response
- Integrates the response
- Two to three supporting ideas why this is so!





# The Response

- The ideas that further the thesis now shape the essay.
- Judicious and substantive textual support.
- Context, values, form and features



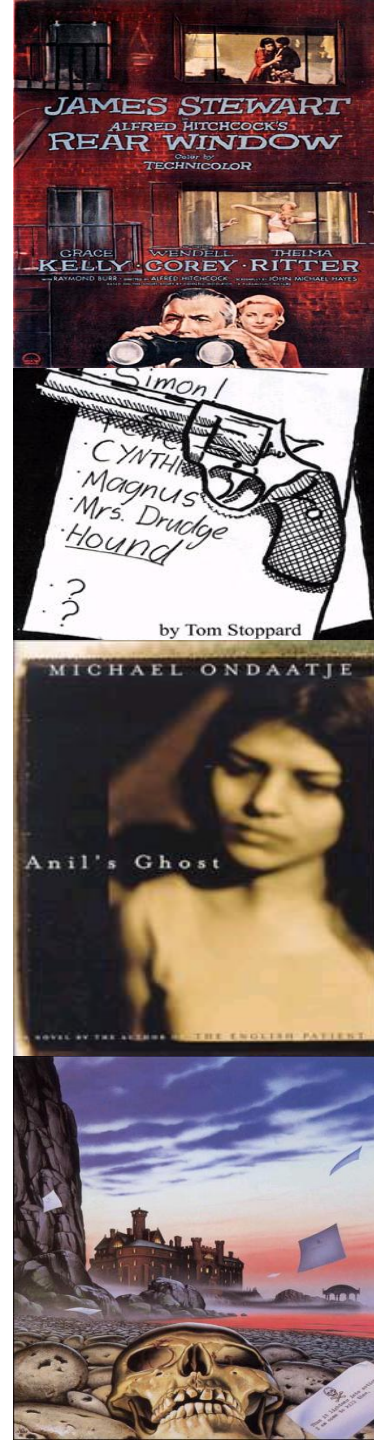


# Thesis – Line of Argument

## ***“What piece of work is man?”***

Genres may develop differences to reflect the changing times, but they will always reflect the human condition.

- Genres “*embody the crucial ideological concerns of the time in which they are popular*” (Fiske, 1987).
- Who we are and who we want to be - Identity
- What we are capable of – the dark side, the knight errant, the intellect, the femme fatale...
- How we respond: inaction or action



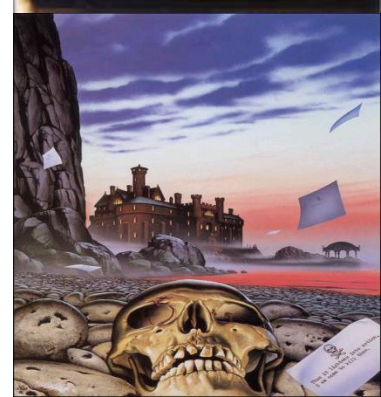
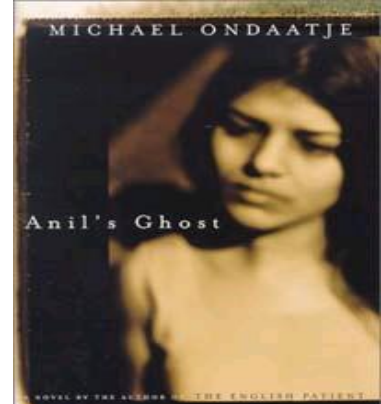
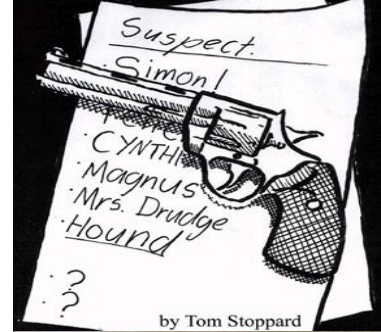
# What piece of work is a man?

## ■ *The Real Inspector Hound:*

- Context: Cynicism and loss of faith in justice
- Dark desires – wish fulfillment
- Greed and ambition
- Egocentricity

## ■ *Skull Beneath the Skin:*

- Context: Thatcherism, control and Victorian ideals
- *“How the characters... became the people they are, the people capable of such deeds”* PD. James.
- Human frailty: Greed, revenge, jealousy...



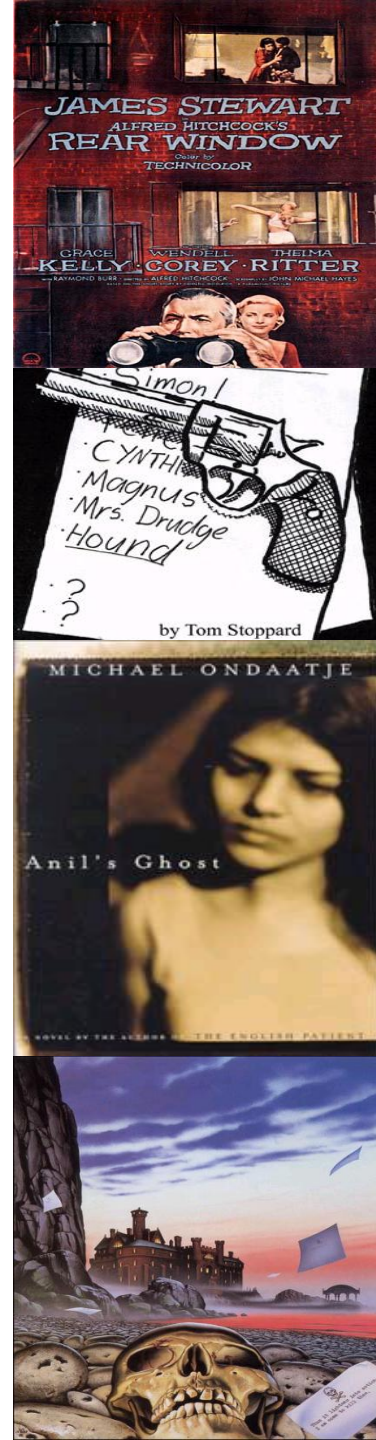
# What piece of work is a man?

## ■ *Anil's Ghost:*

- Context: Internecine crimes .  
Apathy and distortion of the truth
- Inhumanity and our compassion
- Action vs. inaction
- Fear and oppression

## ■ *Rear Window:*

- Context: McCarthyism, paranoia
- Voyeurism
- Violence and rage
- Insecurity and fear of intimacy





# Thesis – Line of Argument

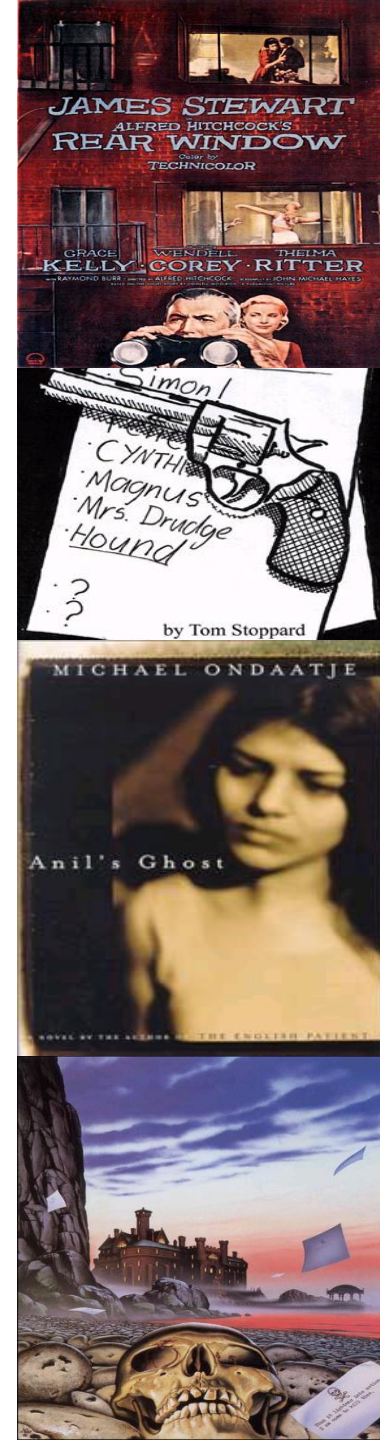
*One constant of crime writing is the isolated setting that intensifies the tension and the mystery, and amplifies humanity's flaws.*

## ■ *The Real Inspector Hound:*

- The close, intimate setting of the theatre
- “this strangely inaccessible house”*

## ■ *Skull Beneath the Skin:*

- Sir Ambrose Gorringe's Victorian castle situated on a remote island
  - “Place matters to me tremendously”*
- P.D.James.





# Thesis

One constant of crime writing is the isolated setting that intensifies the tension and the mystery, and amplifies humanity's flaws.

- **Anil's Ghost:** Set on an island Sri Lanka is isolated by the government's silence, the people's fears and the West's indifference. The crimes have been committed by all sides.
- The setting is lyrically detailed by Ondaatje, such as at the Grove of Ascetics with the epigraphist Palipana or graphically and bluntly conveyed, such as in the hospital scenes.
- Ondaatje powerfully employs omission in some scenes so that the reader used their imagination to evoke images of simple village life interrupted and destroyed by war.



# Thesis

**One constant of crime writing is the isolated setting that intensifies the tension and the mystery, and amplifies humanity's flaws.**

## *The Real Inspector Hound*

- Much of the humour of the parody is created through the setting of the play on the stage that is exaggerated: the guests are isolated by rising water and thickening fog, and surrounded by treacherous swamps: *"this strangely inaccessible house"* (Simon p. 12) *"The fog is very treacherous around here..."* (Mrs Drudge p. 12).
- Setting the play in the theatre of the audience adds to the parody. Stoppard does reveal the flaws of the critics and his stock characters, but his purpose is not so much to intensify but to entertain and unsettle the audience.



# Thesis

**One constant of crime writing is the isolated setting that intensifies the tension and the mystery, and amplifies humanity's flaws.**

## *Rear Window*

- The setting is claustrophobic in the tiny apartments that are huddled so closely together and only connected by small windows.
- The isolated setting is magnified by the use of point of view shots from the perspective of photo-journalist Jeff who is trapped temporarily in a wheelchair.
- His voyeuristic spying on his neighbours represents the protagonist's flaws, exposes their vulnerability and is a catalyst for the mystery that follows.





# Thesis

**One constant of crime writing is the isolated setting that intensifies the tension and the mystery, and amplifies humanity's flaws.**

## *Mystic River*

- Although set in suburban Boston the characters are isolated in the setting by their dark secrets and fears.

## *Spooks*

- Set in the densely populated London but the clandestine nature of MI5 and the spy business means that its characters live isolated lives
- Most of the series are shot in claustrophobic, tightly framed settings, such as high rise car parks and MI5 Headquarters.





# Thesis

**The crafting of the detective reflects the evolution of crime writing, and the changing values and attitudes to crime and the role of the detective.**

## *Anil's Ghost*

- In modern times, the female forensic sleuth has grown in popularity. Anil represents a new breed of detectives and the evolution of the genre.
- This independent, resolute, highly skilled, intelligent and strong women is the protagonist in a novel that challenges the form, structure and conventions of the traditional detective story, and features a crime that is far removed from the traditional murder of an individual.



# Thesis

**The crafting of the detective reflects the evolution of crime writing, and the changing values and attitudes to crime and the role of the detective.**

## *The Real Inspector Hound*

- The title with its emphasis on 'real', questions from the start the role of the detective. The detective in Christie's world after rationally and logically accreting the clues could solve the mystery and restore order.
- In the world of the 1960's with the Vietnam War and political unrest, the world is not rational. What disconcerts the audience is that the detective is the killer and the crime is not neatly solved.



# Thesis

Genres with their mental scheme mirror and influence our ideologies, values and perceptions.

## ■ *Anil's Ghost*

- *"You can't enter my novel with any sureness of where you are going to go. You are going to have to go left, and then jag right again, and so forth"* Ondaatje.
- Challenges the Western notion of truth and the importance of action.

## ■ *Rear Window*

- Lisa and Miss Torso are *"isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised"*
- Lisa only becomes worthy of Jeff's sexual desire when she enters his frame of fantasy.





# Thesis

Genres with their mental scheme mirror and influence our ideologies, values and perceptions.

- ***The Real Inspector Hound***

- Stoppard mocks our semiotic shared code with the cozy genre
- *“The key psychological function of genre is the reduction of complexity as they make texts more understandable, predictable and easy for the responder to fill in the gaps”* (Neale, 1980)

- ***In Bruges***

- Director Martin McDonagh uses black humour and engaging criminals to shock the viewer and invite empathy.



# Preparation

- Have at least five theses that are connected to genre theory and the overarching ideas you have gleaned from your exploration of the prescribed texts and texts of own choosing.



# Imaginative Responses

- *“Better responses demonstrated: comprehensive and sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre” “They were innovative in structure and concept and took risks with both narrative voice and plot that were appropriate for the elective and clearly illustrated the central concerns of the module. They were engaging, often witty and used language in an original, imaginative and insightful manner”*





*“What is the meaning of it, Watson?” said Holmes solemnly, as he laid down the paper.*

*“What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever” (Conan Doyle, 1882).*

# Imaginative Responses

## Key Considerations:

- The direction and intent of the **question**.
- The **craft** of composing a crime fiction text: form, use of language and textual details, structure, voice and demonstrated understanding of the genre.
- The **context**: social, cultural and historical of your text.
- The **values** conveyed by your text.
- The **key ideas** and **issues** of your text.



# 2009-2012 Prescriptions' Rubric

- **The nature of the crime:** Consider what crimes are especially relevant and fascinating to a modern audience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as: terrorism, corporate crime, guns smuggling, kidnapping, etc.
- **The Investigation:** The tools, the methods and what hinders or facilitates the investigation.
- **The detective:** Ethics, values, beliefs, background, biases, perspectives, idiosyncrasies...





# Imaginative Responses

## The craft of composing:

- **Form:** traditional narrative, multiple perspectives, pastiche?
- Use of **language and textual details:** descriptions, imagery figurative devices, dialogue, show not tell!
- **Structure:** non-linear, no resolution, elliptical...
- **Voice:** originality, authenticity and perspective.
- **Genre:** conventions, subversions, unique features?



# Imaginative Responses



The context:

- Times
- Setting
- Detective
- Perspectives
- Characters
- Crime/s and investigation
- Ideas and meaning
- Values

*“The better responses revealed a degree of complexity and individuality in the character of the detective, a wide range of social and cultural contexts and a vast array of crimes.”*

# Imaginative Responses

## The context: times and setting

- Authenticity and realism: know your times and setting!
- Key events that have resonated for you.
- Crime fiction writers intimately establish setting.
- Eye for detail.
- *“Some candidates incorporated a powerful and evocative description of the scene in the image to contextualise their story and then moved into a narrative shift.”*





# Imaginative Responses

## Genre:

- Unless you intend to write a parody, beware!
- *“Better responses were often characterised by layered and experimental narrative form, sometimes in a hybrid of genres”* (Notes from the Marking Centre).



# The Ideas

- Drives and unifies your response
- Crime does pay
- Justice and morality
- Loss of innocence
- Duplicity
- Duality
- Morality
- Greed
- Ambition



# The Setting

- Orient and re-orient your reader
- Establish a world for your characters
- Focus on **showing** not telling through imagery appealing to the senses especially sound, colour, touch and smell, strong verbs, contrast, and a variety of sentence structures.
- You could use: A cityscape, a narrow alleyway, the suburb you live in, an amusement park such as Luna Park or Dreamworld.





# The Crime & Investigation

- Decide what the crime will be remembering your audience and times.
- What if scenario
- Take a leaf out of Flanagan's novel *The Unknown Terrorist* or focus on a crime from the past that continues to haunt modern audiences.
- Investigation shaped by your choice of sleuth, setting and crime. You could focus on what thwarts the investigation and its twists and turns.



# The Detective

- Flaws, perspectives and values
- World they move in
- You may opt to subvert this convention and use an individual who is not a detective. They could be the killer or the victim or even the weapon!

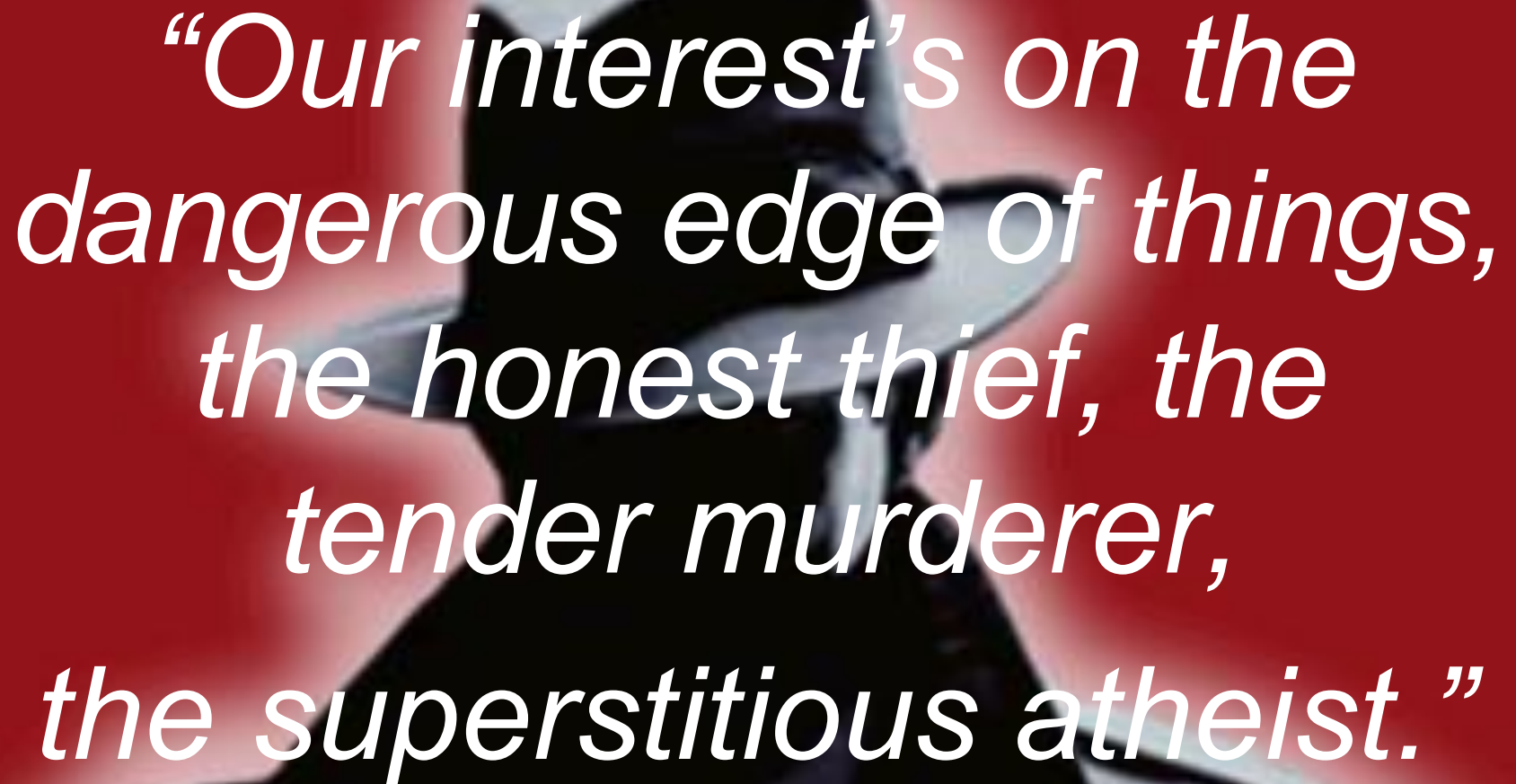


# An Approach

- *“a genre committed to an act of recovery, moving forward to move back”* (Porter, 1981).
- The detective or criminal
- An object, event, action or place
- Provokes an emotion
- Leads to thoughts about the past or future
- Reveals the detective or criminal's past, values and drivers
- Results in an altered perspective or insight into the crime or other characters - anagnorisis







*“Our interest’s on the  
dangerous edge of things,  
the honest thief, the  
tender murderer,  
the superstitious atheist.”*

Robert Browning

# Characters

- Dialogue and voice
- Eyes
- Action or inaction
- Idiosyncrasies
- Talismans
- How they move in their setting
- Relationships
- Perspectives and values



# Characters

- Create characters who are real to the reader, who evoke an emotional response within the reader, and you create suspense because the reader will want to know what is going to happen to these people. Think of the character in Dexter!
- Make your criminal charming and give them a flaw just like your detective. *“The main trick is to get inside the character's head and to try to present him as fully human. No one looks in the mirror and sees a bad guy; we all have our justifications and rationalisations”* (Barry Eisler, *Rain Fall* 2005).

# Characters

- Voice: *“Better responses created convincing voices for their hard-boiled or intellectual sleuths”* (2007 Notes from the Marking Centre).
- Dialogue: Authentic, tense and used to reveal character or the crime



# Structure

- Polyphony of voices
- Use the third person but employ stream of consciousness so that the reader gets inside the head of your character.
- Challenge the reader's assumptions by subverting the narrative structure such as an ambiguous ending or no resolution.



# Values

- What is your *raison d'être*?
- Integrity, honesty, loyalty, compassion, inclusivity, truth...?
- Select the core values that will underpin your text. These values could be the beliefs of the sleuth or could have been compromised by society or the criminal.

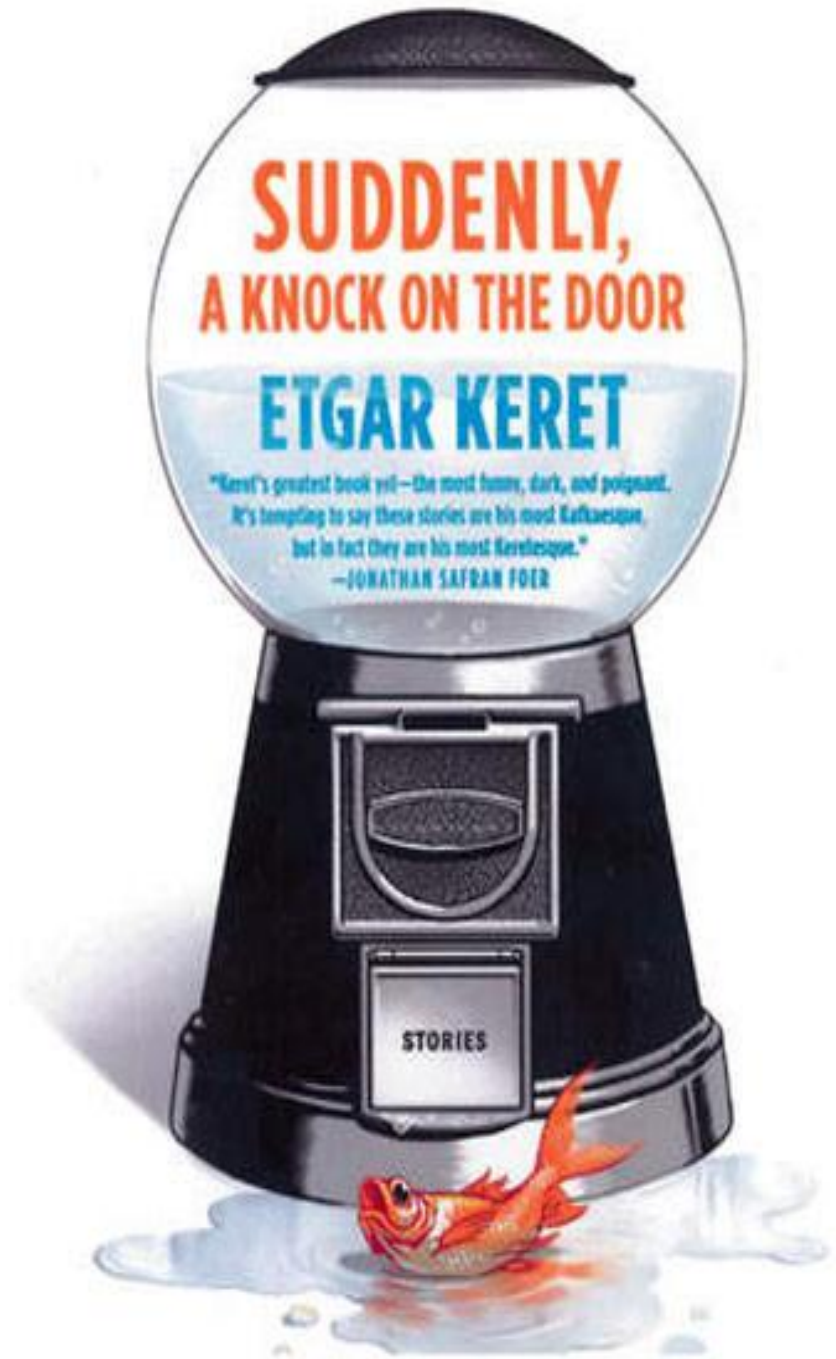


# Preparation

- *“Just get black on white”* (Robert Gray).
- Find a series of images on Google and use them as a stimulus for writing.
- Use a film clip or an instrumental piece as a stimulus for writing. You could take one of the lines from the film and incorporate it into your writing such as Joker’s line from *Batman: The Dark Knight*: *“After this there is no going back.”*
- Motifs: E.g. A mirror as a motif and duality as your concept.

# Preparation

- *Suddenly a Knock on the Door* –
  - The art of the first line!
  - ‘Have you ever wondered what word is most frequently uttered by people about to die a violent death?’
  - ‘Killers for hire, they’re like wildflowers.’







# Imaginative Responses

- Use good writers as models; especially those who 'nail' setting and voice
- Practice
- Work on dialogue
- Focus on how the characters reflect and accept or reject the world they move in
- Ensure that you have a central concept or idea
- Work on creating sensuous and evocative imagery

